

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Education and Implementation of Mitigation Techniques Are the Key

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Hazard Mitigation programs improve coastal resiliency and combat coastal storm impacts. Through Hazard Mitigation Grants Program (HMGP), National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Hazards and Performance Analysis (HPA), Community Education and Outreach (CEO) and Training, this division is educating government authorities and the public by providing guidance on successful mitigation techniques for Mississippi's post-Hurricane Katrina's rebuilding process. Hazard mitigation is sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards and their effects. Mitigation focuses on breaking the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage by implementing efforts to create safer communities, reduce future loss of life and property, and lessen the financial impact of disasters.

HMGP is a state-led program where FEMA awards funds to the state for programs to prevent future loss of life and damage to property and to implement cost-effective sustainable mitigation strategies identified in state and local mitigation plans.

- Awarded \$14,358,316 in grants to the state of Mississippi

NFIP Specialists respond to technical questions about flood insurance and advise governing authorities and property owners of flood hazards including the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFE).

- Mississippi ranks third nationally for gaining new NFIP insurance customers
- Five cities adopted the ABFE in their entirety
- Nine communities have adopted some form of freeboard in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA); four of those adopted ABFE outside the SFHA

HPA provides engineering, economic, and scientific assistance in support of hazard mitigation programs and ensures that technical information is available to all local state and federal recovery partners.

- Works with the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SMHO) to provide technical assistance to school officials in coastal counties to harden buildings to FEMA 361 guidelines for use as shelters in case of future catastrophic events
- Provides structural analysis for coastal construction projects
- Provides Coastal Construction training to contractors, community officials, and the public

CEO identifies disaster-specific mitigation issues and needs, promotes public awareness and encourages appropriate mitigation techniques and programs. CEO develops partnerships with the public and private sector to pursue mitigation goals and objectives, and provides internal and external customer service.

- Participates in outreach at building supply stores, conferences, workshops, and community meetings
- Distributed approximately 1,000,000 publications
- Counseled almost 200,000 applicants

Training is provided to improve the technical skills and knowledge of FEMA and MEMA staff, and local community officials in all aspects of FEMA's involvement in the recovery process.

- Coordinated trainings to approximately 2,100 employees and community officials
- Thirty three staff and community officials from the Gulf Coast area successfully earned the Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) credential
- Provides continuing education for CFMs, Real Estate Agents, Real Estate Appraisers, Architects, and Contractors